



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-5926

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2005

Ross Mason
(208) 334-0693

MEETINGS BEGIN TO ASSIST SMALL BUSINESS IN OBTAINING HEALTH INSURANCE

Public meetings to explain a new program, Access to Health Insurance, will begin March 15. This Program is designed to help employees of small businesses pay for health insurance. There will be 21 statewide meetings in 14 Idaho communities in March and early April. The meetings will offer information about Idaho's Access to Health Insurance program. The pilot program is designed to provide health insurance premium assistance to 1,000 uninsured adults and their minor children.

The meetings will explain how this new program will work, what an employer must do to participate, and how an employee may qualify. Owners of small businesses (2-50 employees), as well as insurance representatives who offer small group health insurance plans, are encouraged to attend.

“The Access to Health Insurance program makes health insurance premiums more affordable for lower income employees of qualified small businesses,” says Patti Campbell, project manager for the Access to Health Insurance program. “Idaho's uninsured population has grown by 26 percent since 2000, even while Idaho has added jobs. This program will provide health insurance premium assistance to adults who qualify.”

Participation in the pilot must be through a small business that currently does **not** offer health insurance. The employer must be willing to pay 50% or more of the employee's premium, or if spouse enrolls, 50% of the combined insurance premium costs for the employee and spouse. The employee must meet income guidelines to qualify for premium assistance (i.e., income for a three-person household of approximately \$2,400 a month or less).

Beginning March 15th informational meetings will be held in: Weiser, Boise, Idaho Falls, Caldwell, Pocatello, Lewiston, Grangeville, Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint, Post Falls, Hailey, Burley, Twin Falls and Challis.

To register:

- Call **1-866-234-9488** toll free or
- Email: **kinghort@idhw.state.id.us** with the number of people, and date and location you would like to attend

For more details visit us at: **www.AccessToHealthInsurance.idaho.gov**

(Editors: For additional information contact Ross Mason in Boise at 334-0693)